

Patent Application of

Quyen C. Hoang

For

TITLE: MULTI-COMPARTMENT SOLID COOKING FUEL PACKAGING

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS: Not Applicable

FEDERALLY SPONSORED RESEARCH: Not Applicable

SEQUENCE LISTING OR PROGRAM: Not Applicable

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. Field of the Invention

This invention relates generally to packaging for solid fuels used in grilling food.

2. Discussion of Background

While the current generation of packaging for solid fuel for barbeque grills are functional and practical, they are limited in terms of providing a single fuel per package. The growing enthusiasm for outdoor grilling/barbequing (hereinafter "BBQ") has spurred the need for different fuels and or combinations thereof to suit different styles of cooking and or tastes. For example, some enthusiast prefer wood type charcoal, others desire the simplicity of the common charcoal briquette, and yet others desire the easy lighting of charcoal briquettes containing an amount of lighter fluid residue (hereinafter "lighter fluid impregnated charcoal " or "starter charcoal") for quick starting. However the packaging technique of the prior art is to package specific solid fuels into individual bags. Said individual packaging creates limitations on the freedom of the grilling enthusiast to control the combinations of solid fuels. For example if the grilling enthusiast wanted to combine solid fuels for his particular cooking style, he/she would need to purchase at least two bags of differing solid fuels. This option however is inconvenient in that it requires increased effort to purchase as well as to pick-up and pour to combine same. Another drawback is related to costs. Specifically, the most affordable solid fuel is the common charcoal briquette. Specialty solid fuels such as wood and lighter fuel impregnated

charcoal can cost upwards of two to three times as much, perhaps even more. The benefits of the specialty solid fuel can be achieved at a lower cost by combining them with the lower cost plain charcoal briquette. Thus, what is required is a package for solid BBQ fuel that accommodates several solid fuels to allow the grilling enthusiast to combine solid fuels according to individual needs and tastes.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

One object of this invention is to provide a package to accommodate several types of solid BBQ fuel to allow for convenient combinations of same to suit the particular needs of the grilling enthusiast.

Another object of the invention is to create a means to achieve the desired benefits of the specialty solid BBQ fuels while minimizing its cost.

Yet another object of the invention is to create a more affordable means to quickly light and bring solid BBQ fuels up to temperature suitable for cooking,

A feature of the invention is that the package contains at least two compartments to segment differing solid BBQ fuels.

The essential advantage of the invention therefore lies in the ability to create a package that contains several varieties of solid BBQ fuels allowing the grilling enthusiast to combine different solid fuels according to tastes and needs.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWING

A more complete appreciation of the invention and many of the attendant advantages thereof will be readily obtained as the same becomes better understood by reference to the following detailed description when considered in connection with the accompanying drawings, wherein:

FIG.1 shows a bisected view perpendicular to the longest side of a package for solid BBQ fuels of the present invention wherein two compartments exist; and

FIG. 2 shows a bisected view perpendicular to the longest side of a package for solid BBQ fuels of the present invention wherein three compartments exist.

DESCRIPTIONS OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

Referring now to the drawings, like reference numerals designate identical or corresponding parts throughout the several views, all elements not required for directly understanding the invention have been omitted. FIG. 1 depicts a package for solid BBQ fuels of the present invention wherein two distinct compartments exist to accommodate solid BBQ fuels of different varieties and comprising a package 1 containing at least one divider 2 inside said package 1 and arranged in a predetermined manner inside the package so as to create two distinct compartments such as compartment A and compartment B. Fig 2 also depicts a package for solid BBQ fuels of the present invention but wherein three distinct compartments exist to accommodate solid BBQ fuels of different varieties and comprising a package 1 containing two dividers 5 inside said package 1 and arranged in a predetermined manner inside the package so as to create three distinct compartments such as compartment A, compartment B and compartment C .

The preferred embodiment of the present invention is that one of the compartments of package 1 is larger than the other. Specifically to accommodate a larger quantity of a more affordable solid BBQ fuel. The other smaller compartment would store more expensive specialty solid BBQ fuels such as starter charcoal or mesquite wood and the like. One embodiment of the present invention would be to have the larger compartment storing common charcoal briquettes and the smaller compartment storing the starter charcoal for a quicker ignition. The grilling enthusiast using this embodiment of the present invention would pour out roughly one part starter charcoal and mound roughly two to three parts of common charcoal briquettes on top. The primary purpose of the starter charcoal is to quickly ignite the common charcoal briquettes and to facilitate in bringing it quickly up to temperature. The primary purpose for the common charcoal briquettes or other non lighter fluid enhanced solid BBQ fuel is as a

heat source for cooking (hereinafter the "solid cooking fuel"). The instant preferred embodiment can also be ideally suited to the convenience of small individual packaged portions that can be simply placed in a BBQ grill and lit in its entirety. In this embodiment, the package would be placed with the compartment with the starter charcoal facing the bottom of the grill. The package would then be lit to begin the burning of the starter charcoal which in turn will burn and eventually bring the solid cooking fuel up to temperature suitable for grilling.

Modifying the aforementioned ratios with a higher quantity of solid cooking fuel would result in lower grilling costs but also a longer wait time to bring the coals up to temperature. However modifying said ratio with a higher quantity of starter charcoal will result in a quicker ignition and reduced time to bring the solid cooking fuel up to temperature but also will increase the costs of grilling.

The instant embodiment also functions ideally when used with charcoal "chimney starters". Starter charcoals of the prior art are not designed to be used in chimney starters as high concentrated flames generally results leading to a potential fire hazard. Using the present invention, the grilling enthusiast can dramatically reduce the time it takes to bring solid BBQ fuels up to temperature in a typical chimney starter. Specifically, the grilling enthusiast would pour in about just enough to cover the bottom of the chimney starter. Then, the grilling enthusiast would fill up the chimney starter with the solid cooking fuel. However when using a chimney starter, it is necessary to utilize a higher ratio of solid cooking fuel as the chimney itself functions to concentrate the flame from the starter charcoal thus increasing its efficiency to bring the solid cooking fuel up to temperature. Again using a higher ratio of starter charcoal would reduce the time to bring the solid cooking fuel up to temperature, but would increase the grilling costs as well as fire hazard especially in the case where chimney starters are used. In the case of chimney starters, a high ratio of solid cooking fuel is recommended as it both reduces the cost of grilling as well as reduces the potential fire hazard.

Another embodiment of the present invention would be to use a combination starter charcoal with special flavor enhancing hard wood coals. This combination is ideal for the grilling enthusiast who prioritizes convenience and taste above costs. It is common knowledge to BBQ enthusiasts that cooking over hard- wood coals such as mesquite, apple, hickory, pecan etc. greatly enhances the flavor

of the food. Therefore, another embodiment of the present invention would be to provide a package 1 with compartments contained therein wherein one of the compartments is larger than the other. The larger compartment would contain the specialty hardwood coal as the solid cooking fuel. The smaller compartment would contain the starter charcoal.

Still, another embodiment of the present invention is to provide a package 1 with at least three compartments contained therein. In this embodiment, the three compartments would each contain one type of solid BBQ fuel. Specifically, starter charcoal, common briquettes and a specialty hardwood coal wherein the starter charcoal is used to bring the cooking fuel up to temperature, both the common briquettes and the hardwood coal functions as the cooking fuel with the additional benefit of the hardwood coal also functioning as a flavor enhancer. In this embodiment, the grilling enthusiast has an increased range of benefits such as quick ignition, enhanced flavor and reduced cost over comparable products of the prior art.

Yet, another embodiment of the present invention is to provide a package 1 with at least three compartments contained therein. In this embodiment, the three compartments would each contain one type of solid BBQ fuel. Specifically, starter charcoal, and at least two varieties of specialty hardwood coal wherein the starter charcoal is used to bring the cooking fuel up to temperature, and the hardwood coal functions as the cooking fuel and flavor enhancer. The purpose of the two varieties of hardwood coals is to allow the cooking enthusiast to mix a variety of hardwood coals to custom tailor a specific flavor profile. In this embodiment, the grilling enthusiast has an increased range of benefits such as quick ignition, enhanced flavor and reduced cost over comparable products of the prior art.

Countless embodiments are envisioned that utilizes variations in the number of compartments above two and variations in the combinations of solid BBQ fuels provided in the package with said variations too numerous to list.

Though many packaging techniques for solid BBQ fuel have been disclosed, the present invention can be distinguished over the prior art by it's unique multi-compartment approach. For example, U.S. Patent 6,224,643 filed by Mungia discloses a bag to package charcoal with a book of matches contained inside. Though said patent discloses an ignition means e.g. matches stored in a

secondary bag or pouch which is connected to the primary bag which contains the charcoal, it does not itself countenance the partitioning of a variety of solid fuels. U.S. Patent 4,101,292 discloses a bag for packaging coal with said bag filled with inert gas and additional processes. Said patent focuses on a method to both package solid fuels and a method to maintain its physical and chemical integrity. Still other prior inventions disclose method for a structured and rigid package that is designed to both contain the charcoal as well as a source of ignition to facilitate bringing the solid fuel up to temperature.

The invention has been described in an illustrative manner, and it is to be understood that the terminology, which has been used, is intended to be in the nature of words of description rather than of limitation. Obviously, numerous modifications and variations of the present invention are possible in light of the above teachings. It is therefore understood that within the scope of the appended claims, the invention may be practiced otherwise than as specifically described herein.

What is claimed as new and desired to be secured by Letters Patent of the U.S. is:

1. A packaging for solid cooking fuel, comprising:
 - a. a container with an interior space contained therein;
 - b. at least one interior space dividing means situated in a predetermined location within said container;
 - c. a predetermined primary variety of solid cooking fuel disposed within one of the several interior compartments formed by interior space dividing means located within said container;
 - d. at least one additional predetermined variety of solid cooking fuel that is different from said primary variety of solid cooking fuel disposed within the remaining interior compartment;

whereby multiple varieties of solid cooking fuel can be contained in a single package,